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**NOAA Honors Ionia, Mich., Resident Jane Sawtell for
Contributions to National Weather Service Volunteer Observer Program**

Recognizing outstanding service to America, the US National Weather Service has named Ionia, Michigan, resident Jane Sawtell a recipient of the John Campanius Holm Award for outstanding service in the Cooperative Weather Observer Program. The award is the agency's second most prestigious and only 25 are presented each year to cooperative weather observers from around the country.

"Cooperative observers are the bedrock of weather data collection and analysis," said Daniel K. Cobb, meteorologist in charge of NOAA's Grand Rapids National Weather Service office. "Numerous technological breakthroughs have brought great benefits to the Nation in terms of better forecasts and warnings. But without the century-long accumulation of accurate weather observations taken by volunteer observers, scientists could not begin to adequately describe the climate of the United States. We cannot thank Jane Sawtell enough for her years of service to America and her local community."

The National Weather Service Staff presented 3 awards to Jane and her family during a surprise City Council ceremony at the Ionia, MI. City Hall on Tuesday, August 2nd^h, 2011. The Mayor of Ionia, Dan Balice, opened the City Council meeting with the presentation. National Weather Service Grand Rapids' Observation Program Leader, George Wetzel, made two award presentations to Jane, and one to her husband, Joe. Jane received the Holm award as the only Michigan recipient this year, and also took home her 25 year Length of Service award. Joe Sawtell received a Special Service Award for his longtime support of Jane and her work within the COOP observer program.

Attending the ceremony were Jane's son Joey and his wife. Also present were members of the local Ionia community and another Cooperative Network Observer from nearby. After the presentation Jane was presented with a National Weather Service jacket no doubt coming in handy for this seasons winter readings.

The National Weather Service's Cooperative Weather Observer Program has given scientists and researchers continuous observational data since the program's inception more than a century ago. Today nearly 12,000 volunteer observers participate in the nationwide program to provide daily reports on temperature, precipitation and other weather factors such as snow depth, river levels and soil temperature.

Sawtell, began service at the Ionia 2SSW observing site April 26th, 1991, reporting daily temperature and precipitation data, including snowfall and snow depth to the Grand Rapids forecast office. Jane is also the backup river gage reader for the Ionia gage on the Grand River. Jane's reports have provided important data to NOAA forecasters and hydrologists and climate scientists. Over the years, she has provided more than 9,200 daily reports to the National



Weather Service. Continuous records provide an accurate picture of a locale's normal weather and a basis for predicting future trends. Data are invaluable for scientists studying floods, droughts and heat and cold waves.

Many historic figures maintained weather records, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson maintained an almost unbroken record of weather observations between 1776 and 1816, and Washington took weather observations just a few days before he died. John Campanius Holm's weather records, taken without benefit of instruments in 1644 and 1645, are the earliest known recorded observations in the United States. The Jefferson and Holm awards are named for these weather observation pioneers.

The first extensive network of cooperative stations was set up in the 1890s as a result of an 1890 act of Congress that established the U.S. Weather Bureau. The rest is history.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA's National Weather Service: <http://www.weather.gov>

National Weather Service Grand Rapids: <http://www.weather.gov/grr>